United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

◆ Secretary-General to recommend to Security Council deployment of United Nations peace-keeping force in Yugoslavia, as outlined in annex of his report of 11 December.

◆ Fifth Committee approves appropriations for peace-keeping operations in Cambodia; recommends General Assembly action.

◆ United States representative says United Nations Charter is flexible and has stood test of time; states also that Security Council has worked "magnificently" in past 18 months.

◆ Eighth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, currently underway in Cartagena, Colombia, hears statements by Finish Secretary of State; Managing Director of International Monetary Fund; and Director-General of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

◆ Palestinian Rights Committee Chairman expresses "anguish and outrage at death of Palestinians" in Israeli custody.

◆ World Health Organization says over one million new HIV infections have occurred in past eight months, bringing total number of cases worldwide to an estimated 10 to 12 million.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has decided to recommend to the Security Council the dispatch of a United Nations peace-keeping force to Yugoslavia totalling more than 10,000 military and civilian personnel.

His Spokesman, François Giuliani, told correspondents today that the recommendation of the Secretary-General would follow the outline contained in annex III of his report to the Security Council, dated 11 December.

He said the Secretary-General was conscious that there remained a number of unanswered questions concerning such an operation and was of the view that the success of the operation was predicated upon the full cooperation and support of all the parties in Yugoslavia.

(more)

For information media--not an official record

Mr. Boutros-Ghali met today at noon with the five Permanent Members of the Security Council -- China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States -- to brief them on his intentions. His report to the Council containing the recommendation was being drafted and would come out early next week, the Spokesman said. Once the Council has adopted the resolution and given the green light to the operation, "there should be Blue Helmets in the area within a couple of weeks", he said.

In reply to correspondents' questions about the financial aspect of the operation, the Spokesman said Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding, the head of United Nations peace-keeping operations, had met today with some 30 potential contributors to discuss the expected cost of approximately $400 million per year.

Speaking to correspondents following the meeting between "the five" and the Secretary-General, the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nation, Yuliy Vorontsov, said the sooner the peace-keeping force was deployed the better it would be for Yugoslavia. He noted that the concept outlined in the Secretary-General's report was "a very good plan for the area". (S/23280)

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Appropriations of $200 million dollars for the initial operation of the United Nations Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) and $19.2 million for the expanded mandate of the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) were both approved today by the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary).

The Committee took this action by approving, without a vote, two draft resolutions which would have the General Assembly decide to apportion the $200 million among Member States, and request the Secretary-General to establish a special account for UNTAC.

The Secretary-General had requested that amount as much of Cambodia's infrastructure had severely deteriorated. Basic requirements such as office space, drinking water, transportation services, power generation and medical services were unavailable, in very short supply or in unsatisfactory condition.

UNTAC will be responsible for administering the country during the transition period; monitoring and enforcing protection of human rights; verifying the cease-fire, and conducting elections, initially set for late April or early May of 1993. The funding of UNAMIC was approved until April 30,

The Assembly is expected to take action on these drafts tomorrow.

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The Charter of the United Nations had stood the test of time and had been flexibly interpreted, the representative of the United States, Robert B. Rosenstock, told the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on Strengthening the Role of the Organization, yesterday.

(more)

The Security Council had performed magnificently over the last 18 months, he said, which greatly strengthened the capacity of the United Nations to react to threats against international peace and security. It was odd now to hear opposition to the unanimity rule in the Council; those arguments had long since lost whatever power they might have once had, he said. Mr. Rosenstock pointed out that the emergence of new nations was reflected in the current composition of the Council and that countries of the "so-called third world" had a cumulative veto.

Other speakers yesterday called for more equitable representation in the Security Council. The representative of Egypt, Nabil Elaraby, proposed the establishment of a preparatory committee on the revision of the Charter, by 1995. The delegate from the Philippines, Simon R. Raya, cautioned that political will and incremental change were more likely to effect true reform than were sweeping structural reforms.

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The Eighth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD VIII) continued yesterday in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, hearing a statement by Martti Ahtisaari, Secretary of State in Finland's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He told the Conference that Finland had granted duty-free entry to almost all imports from the least developed countries. And he called for debt reductions of up to 80 per cent which, he said, should be granted to the most indebted countries on a case-by-case basis.

Among others addressing the Conference yesterday, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Michel Camdessus, said the new opportunities presented by momentous changes in the political and economic framework were accompanied by risks which could "prevent us from reaping the harvest of all our efforts". Those were risks of instability, marginalization and transition, he said. Priority should be given to combating drug trafficking, money laundering and excessive population growth, he said.

Arthur Dunkel, Director-General of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), told the Conference "the hour of truth for the Uruguay Round has arrived". He said the Round was the "first opportunity to put in place a strengthened and expanded multilateral trading system able to serve the changing needs of the international trading community for the remainder of this century and beyond".

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The Chairman of the Palestinian Rights Committee has expressed "anguish and outrage" at the death of Palestinians in Israeli custody and "the systematic use of torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees" by Israeli authorities.

In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 11 February, Committee Chairman Kéba Birane Cisse described an incident on 4 February in which Mustapha al-Akawi, a 35-year-old Jerusalem resident, had died while under

interrogation in Hebron Prison in the occupied West Bank. The letter also cited other incidents reported by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Amnesty International, in which prisoners allegedly died or were ill-treated while in the custody of Israeli authorities; it also referred to a published report by Betzelem, the Israeli Information Centre on Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, which found that "a number of interrogation methods routinely used are prohibited by international human rights instruments, as well as by Israeli laws banning the use of force to extract confessions".

The Palestinian Rights Chairman urgently appealed to the Secretary-General, the Human Rights Committee and the Committee against Torture, to take steps to ensure that Israel desists "forthwith" from using illegal methods in its treatment of Palestinian detainees and respects its international obligations.
(S/23570)

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Another one million people have become infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in the past eight months, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced yesterday. That brings the total number of cases of HIV infection worldwide since the start of the pandemic 10 years ago to an estimated 10 to 12 million.

According to WHO, well over 90 per cent of the newly infected adults acquired their infection from heterosexual intercourse, with equal numbers of men and women becoming infected. That trend was evident not just in developing countries but, increasingly, in the industrialized countries too.

Close to 2 million people have reached the late stage of HIV infection known as AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome). Because it takes an average of 10 years for an HIV-infected adult to develop AIDS, WHO points out that the rise in cases since last April foreshadows what will be an increasing trend throughout this decade and beyond. Basing its prediction on its current findings, the Organization estimates that by the year 2000 between 30 and 40 million people will have the infection.

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